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Title:

Press statement by the Minister for Health: Workshop on Aboriginal medical services

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57/74
PRESS STATEMENT BY THE MINISTER FOR HEALTH, DR D.N. EVERINGHAM
WORKSHOP ON ABORIGINAL MEDICAL SERVICES

The Minister for Health, Dr D.N. Everingham, will open a three-day workshop on Aboriginal medical services at Albury, New South Wales, on Friday.

The workshop will be attended by government Aboriginal health workers, representatives from Aboriginal Medical Services in the States and the National Aboriginal Congress, as well as voluntary organisations.

Experiences will be exchanged between those engaged in Aboriginal Medical Services. The provision of such services in other centres and training programs will also be discussed.

Dr Everingham said it was essential for Aboriginal people to take greater responsibility in organising their own health care.

Among the guests at the workshop will be Dr J. Hirshmann, World Health Organisation representative for the South Pacific, and Ms Joan Bentley, a W.H.O. nursing advisor. Dr Hirshmann will outline the training of health workers in developing countries.

Dr Everingham said today that the training of health workers in Aboriginal communities in Australia was an important step forward.

He said that about 25 Aboriginal health workers had already undertaken the Grade 2 examination in a new four year Aboriginal health worker course in the Northern Territory.

Wherever possible, traditional Aboriginal medical practitioners were being incorporated into the Aboriginal health worker scheme.

Dr Everingham said it was hoped that such health workers would have an impact on that part of the illness spectrum that had proved resistant to conventional medical care systems.

The current objective was to achieve two health workers per 500 people in Aboriginal communities and the principle was that Aboriginal communities select their own candidates for the health workers' training program.

The three day workshop at Albury is being organised by the Australian Department of Health. It will be held at the Albury Travelodge, and will be opened by Dr Everingham at 1.30 p.m. on Friday.

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--Canberra July 4, 1974.